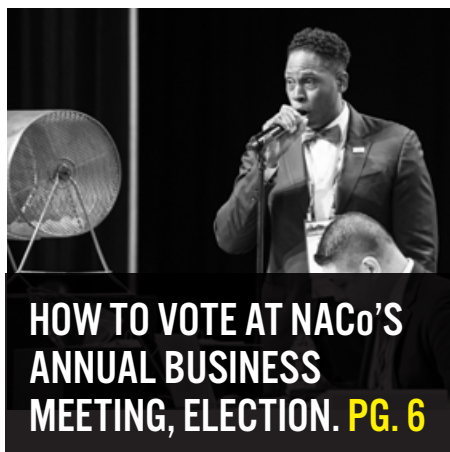




HOUSING VOUCHERS HELP YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER-CARE. **PG. 4**



HOW TO VOTE AT NACo'S ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, ELECTION. **PG. 6**



ANIMAL SHELTER ADDS SERVICES AS COUNTY POPULATION BOOMS. **PG. 11**

Narcan vending machines help deter overdose deaths

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

Vending machines stocked with Narcan are popping up all over the country, increasing access to the overdose-reversing drug and alleviating the stigma of substance use disorder. Through state funding, Wayne State University's Center for Behavioral Health and Justice (CBHJ), located in Wayne County, Mich., is installing dispensers in 27 counties throughout the state in county jails and organizations that specialize in harm reduction and recovery.

The hope is that providing Narcan in such a convenient way at no cost will encourage all people, whether they personally use substances or not, to carry the life-saving drug. More than 106,000 people died in 2021 from drug-involved overdose deaths, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The vending machines,

which are funded through a grant program the center has with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, distributed over 7,075 kits last year, according to CBHJ Program Manager Matthew Costello.

"We understand a primary utilizer of our machines is going to be people who may not be opioid involved at all, but they know of a loved one or a person that they care about who is, and want to be prepared for that," Costello said. "For somebody who's not involved, it's like any other emergency situation — if you come across somebody on the street or in your workplace or something like that, you can then have the opportunity to administer a life-saving antidote medication right away without delay."

Narcan is available at more than 1,575 pharmacies across Michigan and is covered by

See **NARCAN** page 2

"We keep defibrillators in just about every public space that there are out there, why are we not doing these same kinds of things for Naloxone?"

— *Matthew Costello, Center for Behavioral Health and Justice, Wayne State University, Mich.*



A fisherman removes a derelict crab trap from the Chesapeake Bay. Photo courtesy of Baltimore County, Md.

Baltimore County bay cleanup aids local ecosystem, crabbing

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

It was the problem that flew under the radar. Or to be more accurate, plummeted below the sonar.

Propellers pushing boats

throughout the Chesapeake Bay were inadvertently severing the ropes that connected buoys to thousands of traps that fed Maryland's appetite for blue crabs. With the cages no longer tethered to something keeping them close to the surface, they

sunk to the bottom of the bay, still serving as an obstacle for crabs but keeping them from the watermen and waterwomen who brought them to market.

For the last two years, Balti-

See **CLEANUP** page 3

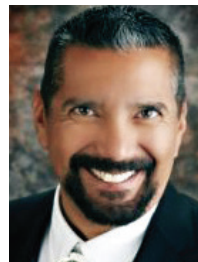
'Breaking Bad' actor's role of a lifetime: County commissioner

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

Steven Michael Quezada is what performers call a quadruple threat - he's an actor, a writer, a producer... and an elected official. The string that ties all of them together? Bernalillo County, N.M.

"My family goes back 700 years here," Quezada said. "I'm mostly Native American, my bloodline is 23 percent Span-

ish — this is where our land is, these are our people and now in 2023, they're all our people. No matter where you came from, if you just moved here yesterday or if your family has been here as long as my family has, we're family now. I tell people, 'You're a Mexican now, you're just a 'new' one, a New Mexican now,'" he said with a laugh,



Quezada

referencing the title of his 2022 stand-up comedy special.

Quezada never planned to go into government but has always been involved in the community — from working with a gang intervention program in his 20s to becoming the president of the governing council at his

See **QUEZADA** page 3

Vending machines dispensing free Narcan provide anonymity

From NARCAN page 1

Medicaid and other forms of insurance; however, as it becomes more widely available, health economists predict the new price to receive the drug over-the-counter will be between \$35 and \$65 before the retail markup, as reported in The New York Times.

The center is working with Shaffer Distributing Co., which traditionally sells the vending machines for \$3,400 to \$11,000, to place the machines. Fifteen machines were installed through the grant in FY 2022 and 20 more will be installed in FY 2023.

“We understand — whether it be the community sites we’re placing them in or the jails — most of them are in budgets that probably would not be robust enough to be able to support the purchase

of the Naloxone medication itself,” Costello said. “So, we feel that we’d be very vulnerable should that opportunity to order it through the portal be closed.”

In addition to providing Narcan at no cost, a draw of the vending machine structure is the anonymity it provides, as it doesn’t collect any identifiable information from those who use them.

“I could walk up to any one of our machines right now, hit ‘33,’ a kit drops and I walk away and nobody’s the wiser,” Costello said. “You could go to a participating pharmacy and get a free kit of Narcan, but when we’d have some of our partners do that, they’d go to their doctor and shortly thereafter it would be on their medical record.

“The doctor would be like ‘I see you got a Narcan kit, are

opioids a problem?’ So, it created an outcome people weren’t necessarily comfortable with.”

Amanda Wills, an administrative assistant at Live Rite Structured Recovery Resource Center, located in Macomb County, Mich., said that she’s seen “a lot” more people access Narcan through the center’s vending machine than by asking staff for doses since the machine was installed in January. Live Rite is the first location in Macomb County to install a machine through the CBHJ grant, and as of April 1, its dispensed 90 boxes, according to Wills.

“We’re trying to cover as many bases as we can,” Wills said.

“We already handed it out in the office, so we thought it would be great to have a machine here, so that way, even when our office isn’t open — like in the evenings for AA and NA meetings — people could still get it after-hours.”

Release vestibules in county jails are a convenient location for the vending machines, because they’re open 24/7 to the public and overdose rates

upon release from jail are 129 times higher than that of the general population. According to Costello, around 60 percent of the vending machines installed through the grant are in county jails.

“One thing jails don’t need to be educated on is the depth of the opioid crisis, because they’re living it every day,” Costello said. “Urban jails, rural jails — they’re all getting

people coming in and going through very difficult opioid withdrawals, and there’s really not much that was going on to provide services for them, so the sheriff’s offices need to work around that.”

To get the word out about the Narcan dispensers, the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice reached out to

See NARCAN page 15



A vending machine dispenses Narcan, an overdose-reversing drug.

SNAP/STATS

2023 HURRICANE SEASON PROJECTION

Hurricane season is June 1-Nov. 30

INFORMATION	NUMBERS
Named storms	11-15
Hurricane-strength	4-8
Major hurricanes.....	1-3
Direct U.S. impact.....	2-4
2022 hurricane damage	\$165 billion

Source: AccuWeather

CORRECTION

Oops!

In the March 27 issue of *County News*, Profiles in Service featured Pasco County, Fla. Commissioner **Kathryn Starkey**. She has served the public for 16 years, not six years. We regret the error.

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County cleans up ‘ghost traps’

From CLEANUP page 1

more County has been supporting an annual removal of derelict crab pots, removing a hazard to aquatic life and helping support a vital part of the county’s economy and character.

“It’s a form of competition with fisheries,” said Ward Slacum, executive director of the Oyster Recovery Partnership. “Crabs and other life are getting caught in these viable traps, but nobody is bringing them to the surface. They’re eventually dying down there and never taken to market.”

There’s a lot of collateral damage in addition to crabs, according to Baltimore County natural resource specialist Dave Riter: White perch, eels, Black Sea bass and more.

The more animals that die in the “ghost traps,” the more they attract other fish and become bait. Slacum estimates roughly 10 percent of crab traps are lost because of severed tether lines, particularly as recreational boating increases in heavily crabbed waters. Those ghost traps can claim millions of crabs per year.

Based on community feedback, County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. directed the county’s Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability to help fund cleanup efforts led by the Oyster Recovery Partnership.

For two weeks each spring, local watermen recruited by the partnership have trawled the bay with grappling hooks, recovering hundreds of pots that could be as large as 3 feet by 3

feet by 3 feet.

“By periodically removing these crab traps, there’s an immediate impact on the fisheries population and, one could argue, an economic benefit too,” he said.

In 2022, a \$125,000 allocation funded the removal of 2,051 out of a possible 3,625 objects identified by sonar scans over a 2,000-acre area off of North Point State Park. In 2023, 1,262 out of 2,116 pots in a 3,000-acre area off of Hart Miller Island came off the bay floor. Each operation put a major dent in what had accumulated over decades, and some of the materials are recycled.

“It has a quick return,” Riter said. “A lot of things we do in my office take years to design and build. It takes two, three, four years to get my projects in the ground and then do they have an immediate benefit? Not like this.”

“We’re very excited that Baltimore County sees the value in it to pursue it as a project,” Slacum said.

“It’s about sustainable fishing practices, it’s about that investment in our region. We want these fishermen to make a living, we want to help them define better ways to fish more sustainable practices removing those traps. I think that that’s a sustainable practice.

“It’s a win-win because they are using their knowledge of the area to do a good job clearing it, and they are being paid to ultimately make the bay more productive for the industry and cut waste.” **CN**

‘To govern is to try to help the most people’

From QUEZADA page 1

children’s charter school.

“If you want your community to be successful and succeed, the best way for that to happen is for you to be involved, so I took that step,” Quezada said. “... When you start, you realize that you’re always trying to chase down the funding, and funding comes from elected officials, so you get involved by first supporting people who are running for office who believe in the work that you’re doing.

“And I kind of warned all of them that if it got to a point where I felt that they weren’t funding the programs that were important to the kids and my community, that I would run.”

Quezada followed through on that “warning,” and was elected to the Albuquerque Board of Education in 2013 and has represented the county as a commissioner since 2016.

“My oldest brother, who passed away at 34 because he was born with a hole in his heart, he was supposed to be the politician,” Quezada said. “He was this brilliant mind — unfortunately, his health didn’t allow him to live that long, but what he did do in his 34 years was pretty amazing ... and I think that’s where I got the desire to help the community, through his lens and the way he looks at the world.

“... I just want to make sure that we have the highest quality of life here that we possibly can have, and that comes through government, that stems through policy, through programs that we fund and create, through infrastructure that attracts businesses, from corporations to small businesses — we need them all here.”

Quezada, who has long advocated for more Mexican-American representation in politics, emphasizes the importance of representation in government, particularly on topics like immigration.

“I think that when either you or your family has lived through it, you bring a different perspective,” Quezada said. “... To govern, to me, is you’re try-

ing to help the most amount of people, and a lot of times I think we make decisions based on a minority of people.

“So, immigration — of the people that come here, we punish 100 percent based on the actions of 3 percent,” he said. “Those 3 percent, they come here, and they abuse the opportunities that we’re giving them. Those guys I want to catch, but to punish the other 97 percent that actually come here and create opportunities — not only for themselves, but for the people around them and their children?”

“... We’re making policies to punish them instead of really fixing the system to make them a part of our system.”

Hispanic or Latinos make up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population; less than 8 percent of county commissioners are Hispanic or Latino. It was a lack of Latino roles in theater that led Quezada to fall into his decades-spanning comedy career, which would eventually land him his Screen Actors Guild-award winning role of Drug Enforcement Adminis-

tration agent Steve Gomez in “Breaking Bad.”

Quezada studied Shakespeare in college — even taking on the titular role in Eastern New Mexico University’s performance of Richard III — but it soon became clear to him that pursuing theater as a person of color in the 1980s wouldn’t be easy.

“I came back here to Albuquerque, and when I auditioned, the people that were doing Shakespeare here, they wouldn’t cast me because I was a Mexican,” Quezada said. “And they said, ‘Well, you’re a Mexican, I don’t know why you’re doing Shakespeare.’ So, that bummed me out.”

Quezada then worked at a bilingual community theater, building sets, and wrote his own plays in his free time — ones that created space for people who looked like him. Following the success of his comedy “The First Chicano President,” he was approached to do stand-up.

“I told him to get away from

See QUEZADA page 16



Bernalillo County, N.M. Commissioner Steven Michael Quezada takes the microphone. Quezada juggles his duties as a county commissioner with his career as an actor and comedian. Photo courtesy of Bernalillo County

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cnews@naco.org.



California counties help youth leaving foster-care find housing with HUD vouchers

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

Nearly 25 percent of youth in the U.S. experience homelessness when they age out of the foster care system. To combat the housing crisis among at-risk youth, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) granted 16 local public housing agencies \$12.9 million for housing vouchers, giving 18-to-24-year-olds exiting the foster care system the opportunity to focus on continuing their education or getting a job instead of having to worry about how they're going to put a roof over their heads.

Santa Barbara County's Housing Authority received over \$1.1 million of the total funding, amounting to 58 housing vouchers for foster youth through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative. The funding "walks and talks" like the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and the county's department of social services is in charge of determining which youth are most at-risk for homelessness to receive the vouchers, according to Bernie Baggaly, training and public information coordinator for the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara.

"There's such a lack of affordable housing — it's almost impossible for any youth, and certainly a youth who's exiting foster care, to be able to find stable, affordable housing, so without programs like this, we'd see many more youth who are experiencing homelessness and the effects of that," said Amy Krueger, deputy director of adult and children's services for the county's department of social services. "We see a lot of the youth who are coming through our continuum of care are disparately impacted in terms of our African American and Latinx youth as well as LGBTQ+

youth, so having this resource to help support equity is incredibly important as well."

Youth aren't required to participate in supportive services as a condition of receiving the housing voucher, but the county's social services department will work with them to determine what services they might need to set them best up for success in living independently, Krueger said.

"We look at the array of options that are available to the youth and work with them in terms of what their needs are and what their goals are for independence, and that's how we would prioritize which youth we'd actually be referring out to this program," Krueger said. "That's been identified through the research as really the key to the success — not just having the housing but actually having the support to maintain the housing."

The 58 vouchers, which can be used for up to 36 months, will act as an addition to the 11 that Santa Barbara County's Housing Authority already provides through HUD's Family Unification Program (FUP), which is for

families who are in "imminent danger" of losing their children to foster care or are unable to regain custody of their children because of housing challenges.

Victor Landaverde, a Santa Barbara County FUP recipient, said the housing voucher provided him and his children stability and allowed him to pursue his career as a barber.

"At the time, I was a single parent, and it was very tough, trying to pay rent for me and three kids," Landaverde said. "It gave me the opportunity to let me focus on other things I wanted to accomplish in my life, so since I was able to know that my housing was secure, I was able to get into and dedicate myself full-time to barber school without having to work because it's long hours, and if I had a job I would never see my kids, so it allowed me to be home with them."

Of the 16 FYI recipients, five of them are housing authorities in California, where nearly one-third of the nation's homeless youth population live. The housing vouchers will be effective Aug. 1.

To determine how to best utilize the FYI and FUP housing vouchers, two entities — John Burton Advocates for Youth and the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare — partnered to create a Community of Prac-

tice, bringing together child welfare agencies and public housing authorities in 15 California counties.

The Community of Practice launched in February and hosts bimonthly group and individualized sessions to work through more locally specific obstacles.

of the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare and Lee are leading the Community of Practice, providing information to the participating housing authorities on policy resources, technical assistance and training on the referral process, housing navigation and building



Lee



"We're learning and we're teaching and the housing authorities are learning and teaching."

- Simone Tureck Lee, John Burton Advocates for Youth

"We went through and had [counties], in a supportive manner, set goals for themselves, like 'What do you want to work on? Do you want to focus on landlord recruitment? Building out better partnerships? What are the areas where you see deficits?'" said Simone Tureck Lee, director of housing and health at John Burton Advocates for Youth. "So, we help them set goals.

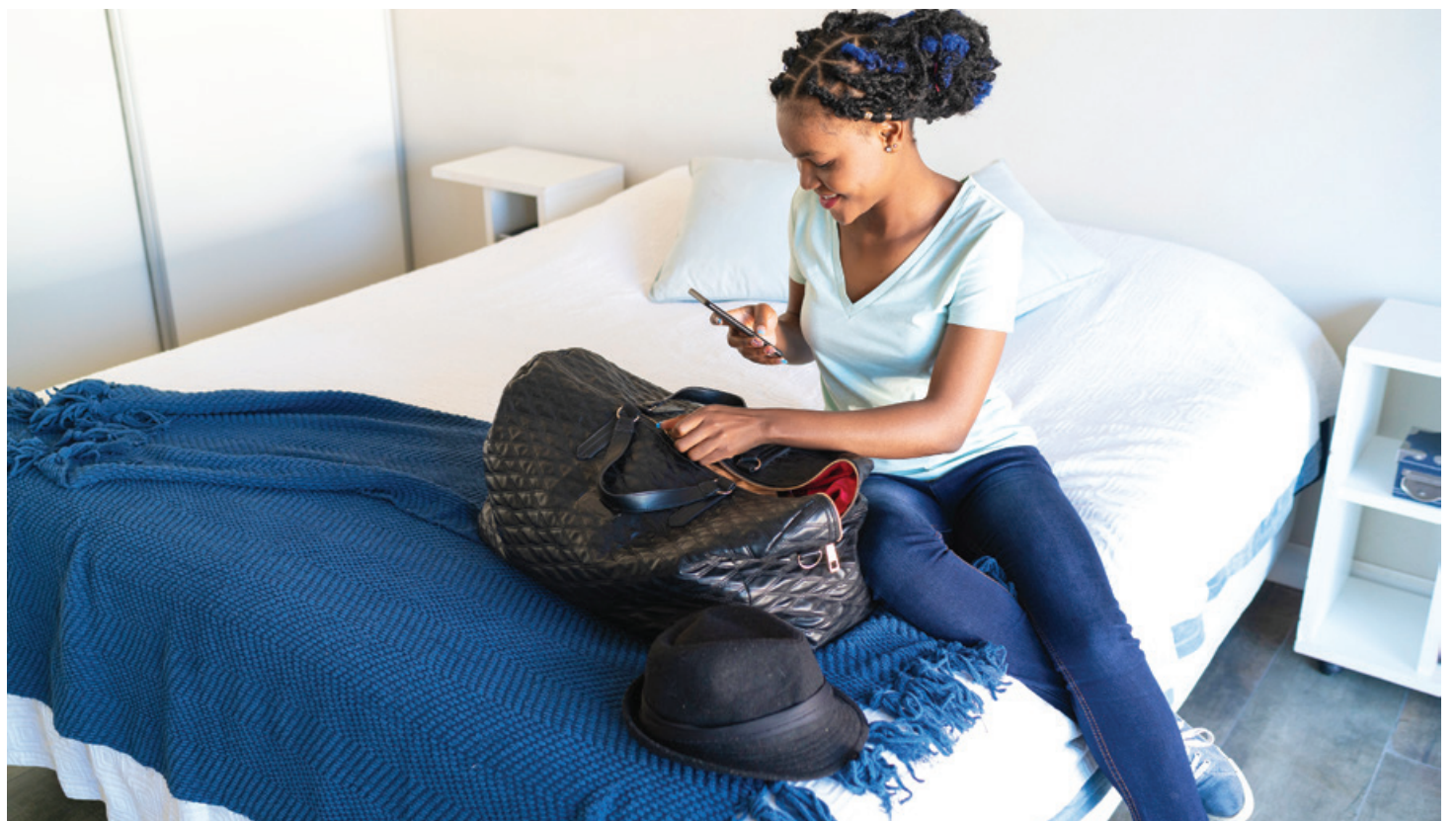
"And then the technical assistance sessions, the individual ones, we work toward those goals each time so it's, 'OK, what are the action items coming out of this call? Let's make sure we work on them in the in-between time and then on the next call, we'll see where we are.'"

Andy Lomeli, John Burton Advocates for Youth's housing and health project manager; Ruth White, executive director

partnerships. Lee emphasized the cross-county collaboration the Community of Practice has fostered.

"We're learning and we're teaching and the housing authorities are learning and teaching," Lee said. "They're experts of what they do, and we're experts on child welfare and our partner Ruth is very close to the housing authority, so it's a nice balance.

"The participants are really bringing to the table their experiences and what's happening on the ground — what they've tried, what's worked, what's not worked, and that's invaluable in helping us to understand, 'Is there a policy fix at the state or the federal level?' We can't know that unless we really understand how these things play out on the ground level." **CN**



Health Rankings look at link between civic life, health

by Ashley Hunt

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) brings actionable data, evidence, guidance and stories to support community-led efforts to grow community power and improve health equity. CHR&R recently released their 2023 National Findings Report, "Cultivating Civic Infrastructure and Participation for Healthier Communities."

For more than a decade, the annual rankings have helped to broaden the nation's understanding about what shapes health by providing data on more than 90 health-influencing factors. County leaders across the nation can use the rankings to find county-level data on factors including housing, children living in poverty and high school completion that all impact how well and how long we live.

This year's rankings explore the connection between civic health and thriving people and places. The report looks at two elements of civic health: Civic infrastructure and civic participation. Civic infrastructure includes the spaces and policies that support opportunities for residents to stay connected and policies and practices that foster belonging. Civic spaces are created and maintained

with intention and provide a foundation for civic action and a space to deliver local programs and solutions.

Civic participation is defined as the ways people engage in community life to improve conditions and shape the community's future. Civic participation can be actionable and realized through political activities such as voting and advocacy and community engagement activities such as volunteering, mentoring or donating to causes.

The 2023 National Findings Report details how intentional investments in civic spaces such as libraries, parks and schools can foster inclusive participation and have a positive impact on health equity. Specifically, the report details how:

- Civic infrastructure does not look the same across U.S. counties. Counties in certain regions of our country — generally places with more social and economic opportunities in the Northeast, West and some parts of the Midwest—have more available and well-resourced civic infrastructure.
- Typically, civic infrastructure goes hand in hand with social and economic opportunity and health. Counties with more available and well-resourced civic infrastructure also have higher rates of high school



completion, higher household incomes, less income inequality, fewer children living in poverty and fewer adults without health insurance. In these counties, people tend to live longer.

- For all communities, well-resourced civic infrastructure is not a given. Regions of our country bear the burden of a legacy of specific types of structural racism and disinvestment. Civic infrastructure is less available and under-resourced among counties along

the U.S.-Mexico Border, within the Black Belt Region, surrounding American Indian/Alaska Native Tribal areas and within Appalachia.

The report highlights Greenville County, S.C., and their efforts to improve Greenlink, the county public transportation system. By mobilizing local advocates called Greenshirts, the county was able to lift community voices to local leaders about the need for enhanced services. This resulted in expanded services hours, new

routes to underserved areas, electronic payment options and additional grant funding. This model is now being adopted by other community organizations to address pressing community health and other needs and ensure that all voices are heard and valued. For more information, visit <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>.

Ashley Hunt is the program manager for Health in the NACo Counties Futures Lab.

WORD SEARCH FRANKLIN COUNTY, MAINE Created by: Meredith Moran

F V D Y C P U S D G R H Y W Y T H N L D
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- BIFOCALS:** The county's namesake, Benjamin Franklin, invented bifocals.
- CANADA:** The county borders Quebec.
- CLEARWATER:** The annual "polar bear dip" in honor of Chester Greenwood Day is in Clearwater Lake.
- DAGGETT:** The state's largest glacial erratic, Daggett Rock, is in the county.
- EARMUFF:** The county is where earmuffs were first patented.
- FARMINGTON:** The county seat is Farmington.
- GOLF:** Sugarloaf Golf Club is ranked as a top 10 golf course nationally for "memorability" and "aesthetics" by Golf Digest.
- GOVERNOR:** The governor of Maine, Janet Mills, was born in Franklin County.
- OCTAGON:** Downtown Farmington's "Octagon House" is on the National Register of Historic Places and was built in 1858 by mason Cyrus Ramsdell.

- PARK:** Mount Blue State Park is Maine's largest state park, on 8,000 acres and features 136 campsites.
- SECOND:** Franklin County has a population of around 30,000 people, making it the second least-populous county in the state.
- SKI:** Skiing is a huge attraction in the area and the county is home to the Maine Ski & Snowboard Museum.
- SUGARLOAF:** Sugarloaf Mountain, located in Carrabassett Valley, is the third-highest peak in the state.
- TRAIL:** A portion of the Appalachian Trail is located in the county.
- UNIVERSITY:** University of Maine Farmington, a founding member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges, is located in the county.

Hire Quality Staff @ Jobs Online

NACo annual business meeting, election coming up!

by John Losh

NACo's 2023 annual business meeting (ABM) and election will be held in-person Monday, July 24 in Travis County, Texas. During the meeting, credentialed NACo members elect NACo officers, set our national policy agenda and conduct other association business.

Voting credentials verify a member county, parish or borough's eligibility to vote and the number of votes they can cast at the meeting. To be eligible to vote, NACo members should:

- Register for the 2023 Annual Conference
- Pay 2023 NACo membership dues in full, and
- Designate one voting delegate by Monday, July 17, 2023 at 5 p.m. EDT.

To facilitate the voting process, members should only authorize one primary voting delegate per county and must provide the cell phone number of the voting delegate. The county's chief elected official,



Councilmember Craig Rice of Montgomery County, Md., speaks during the NACo Annual Business Meeting and Election July 24, 2022 in Adams County, Colo. Photo by Denny Henry

clerk to the county board and conference registrants can visit NACo.org/VotingCredentials to appoint their primary delegate or proxy online. A proxy voter can be another county attendee from the same state or your state association of counties.

Paper voting credential forms will not be mailed to member counties but can be accessed electronically by vis-

iting NACo.org/VotingCredentials.

A member's vote total is determined by the amount of dues paid and dues are based on the population of the 2010 census. Every county receives one vote and is allotted an additional vote for each \$1,200 paid in dues.

- Counties with dues of \$450 to \$1,199 receive one vote

- Counties with dues of \$1,200 to \$2,399 receive two votes

- Counties with dues of \$2,400 to \$3,599 receive three votes, and so on


- The maximum number of votes a county can receive is 51

NACo's Credentials Committee ensures that the process for the meeting is fair and transparent. The committee

guides the credentials process, resolves any credentials disputes and assists during the election itself.

The 2023 Credentials Committee members are:

- Chair: Hon. Karen Digh Allen, public administrator, Callaway County, Mo.
- Member: Hon. Eugene Oliver, chair, Iberia Parish, La.
- Member: Hon. Janet Thompson, commissioner, Boone County, Mo.
- Reading Clerk: Hon. Chuck Washington, supervisor, Riverside County, Calif.
- Tally Clerk: Hon. Matt Prochaska, circuit clerk, Kendall County, Ill.

NACo members will receive additional information on credentials and appointing a delegate by mail and email in June. More information can be accessed at NACo.org/VotingCredentials or by emailing credentials@naco.org. 

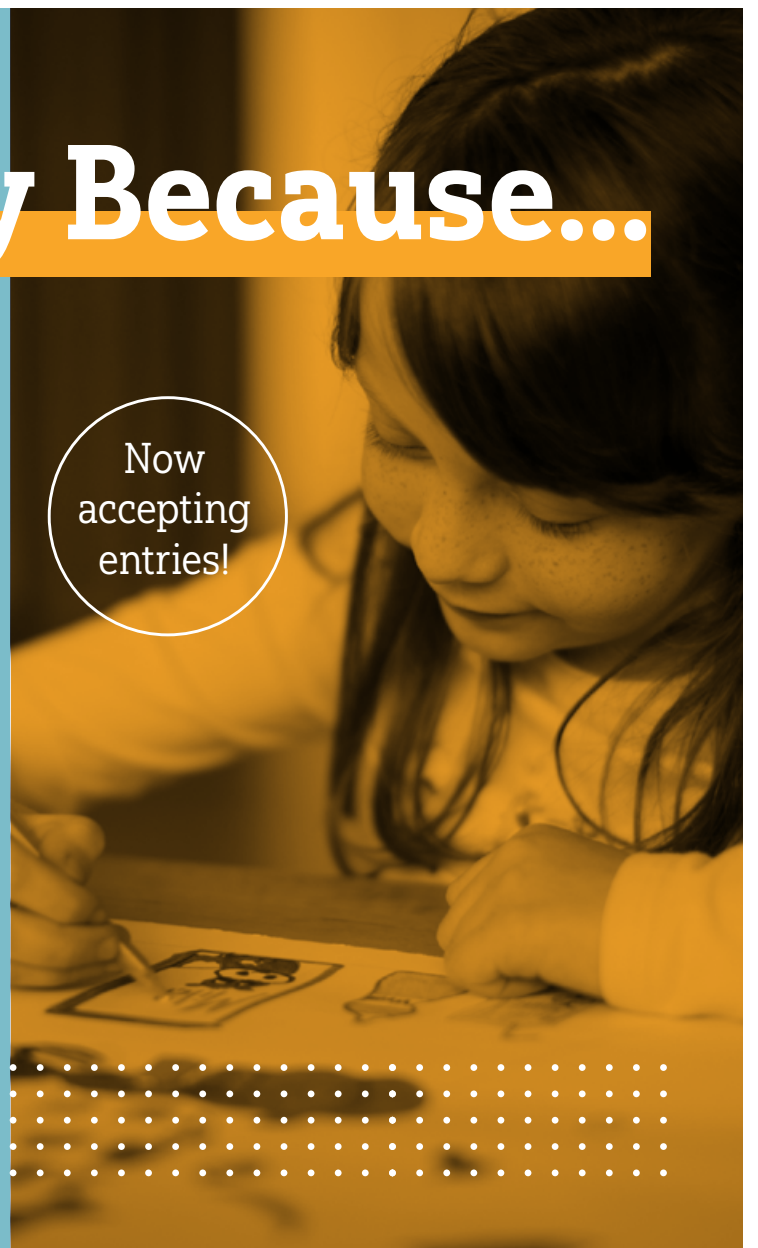
Losh is the associate membership director in NACo's Public Affairs Department.

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ART CONTEST

Now
accepting
entries!



How to make career readiness accessible

by **Annie Qing**

Millions of Americans face barriers to achieving their education and employment potential. For people who are furthest from opportunity, those barriers are often structural and systemic.

Consider a student parent, who lacks reliable childcare and transportation. Or a recent immigrant with limited English proficiency, who may not only struggle to navigate the complex job application process, but also face discrimination in education and employment systems.

Or someone experiencing homelessness who — despite their eagerness to learn and work — has no permanent address, making it difficult to access training or maintain steady employment.

Career and technical education (CTE) and community colleges present tremendous opportunity for individuals who face these barriers. Unlike traditional four-year colleges, these programs require less time and money to complete.

And with the vision of local government leaders, they may also be designed to meet local industry needs — creating nat-

ural pathways to well-paying jobs for students and addressing workforce needs for locally based employers.

However, partnerships between post-secondary education and workforce development organizations should come with the shared vision, commitment and resources to prioritize marginalized learners.

Existing workforce systems are frequently uncoordinated, involving multiple program rules and eligibility requirements that differ across agencies.

Navigating this confusing web of services can not only be stressful, but also exacerbate the inequities that individuals face. Effective cross-systems collaboration includes post-secondary education, workforce development and human services.

County cross-systems collaboration

Because they serve at the intersection of many agencies, counties play a crucial role in coordinating across systems to improve career success outcomes for residents.

In many cases, they have the connections and authority to

ensure that all relevant stakeholders — including representatives from marginalized groups — are present for program planning and data systems alignment.

They may steer the development of program and practice changes that make services more accessible, as well as codify those changes at a systems or policy level.

Critically, counties may also oversee the funding, resource and staffing allocations that support collaborative efforts.

All of these levers are crucial to the development of a truly cooperative system and counties are in a unique position to drive the adoption of these best practices. Some already have.

County success stories

For instance, to support its 78,000 residents, Wilson County, N.C.'s Department of Social Services (DSS) maintains a close partnership with Wilson Community College, where DSS navigators are co-located and share data to assist with human services, educational and financial aid enrollment.

DSS specifically includes educational and employment goal setting as part of their

family stabilization plans, streamlining the path for student parents to graduate and secure a well-paying job.

The county also offers dual high school and college programming at Wilson Academy of Applied Technology (WAAT) for youth interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

All of Wilson County's efforts aid in bolstering their healthcare workforce and health outcomes. In Montgomery County, Ohio, coordination between systems and levels of government has yielded the largest employment and training center in the United States — the Montgomery County Jobs Center. Here, county residents can access employers, educators, social service agencies and representatives from Sinclair Community College to achieve career readiness.


In 2021, the county opened its brick-and-mortar Employment Opportunity Center in West Dayton, where residents can receive mentoring and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federal grant funds of up to \$15,000 to pursue new skills or technical education.

Promoting cross-systems collaboration

To elevate important work from counties like these, NACo is launching its Counties for Career Success (C4CS) initiative supporting cross-systems collaboration between post-secondary education, workforce development and human services.

Counties interested in bridging these systems to support county residents who experience structural inequities and disparities in achieving economic mobility may apply for C4CS's inaugural eight-county cohort as a cross-sector team.

Selected counties for the cohort will not only receive free technical assistance, access to national experts and partners and peer learning opportunities, but also be nationally recognized as leaders in this field.

For more information and to apply, please see our website at www.naco.org/counties-for-career-success or contact Annie Qing, program manager for Health and Human Services, at aqing@naco.org. Applications are due June 23, 2023. 

Annie Qing is program manager for Health and Human Services in NACo's Counties Futures Lab.



NACo supports counties through Reaching Rural Initiative

by **Elise Simonsen**

Despite a lower overall incidence of substance abuse disorder in rural counties, the lack of access to lifesaving measures, treatment and support makes the problem more pronounced and persistent than in urban counties, where options are more plentiful.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance's Reaching Rural Initiative focuses on helping rural counties leverage assets they may already have and forming bolder regional opportunities for collaboration to meet these challenges. The project aims to work across agencies to align life-saving measures among law enforcement, child welfare, prosecutors and more. The program collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State Justice Institute.

An inaugural class of 67, competitively selected fellows from county government, met recently in Loudoun County, Va.

Navajo County, Ariz. Super-

visor Brad Carlyon saw a lot of potential in the initiative.

"This is not just positive change for those we are helping, but positive change for the community," he said. "We need to show that investment in these programs is paying off in the quality of life of the community."

There are two tracks within the class: County teams and individuals. Fellows represent more than 80 rural communities across 14 states. Fellows attended sessions including a resource roundtable with federal representatives, resource roundtable with technical assistance providers and partners (featuring NACo), small group breakouts to discuss how substance use impacts their community. They also discussed strategic communication and how to frame issues to build collaboration, and took part in other small-group activities.

This project was designed for rural justice and public safety practitioners; public health



Navajo County, Ariz. Supervisor Brad Carlyon speaks at the February Reaching Rural Initiative meeting.

and behavioral health practitioners; city, county, and tribal leaders and community groups. The initiative empowers rural practitioners to build deeper cross-sector networks; reimagine how diverse systems with different missions can engage with one another to more effectively serve justice-involved

individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders; and adopt bold solutions to the persistent challenge of substance use and misuse in rural communities.

This inaugural class of rural county fellows will continue to meet throughout the year, including two additional

in-person network meetings. Additionally, this work will be featured in July at NACo's 2023 Annual Conference in Travis County, Texas. [CN](#)

Elise Simonsen is associate program director for Behavioral Health and Justice in the NACo Counties Futures Lab.

A promotional banner for the 2023 NACo Western Interstate Region Conference. The background is a scenic landscape of a mountain range at sunset or sunrise, with a winding road through a valley. In the top right corner, there are two logos: "WIR WESTERN INTERSTATE REGION" and "NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES NACo". Below the logos, there is a call to action: "REGISTER TODAY AND VIEW THE FULL SCHEDULE AT NACo.ORG/EVENTS". The main text, in large white and orange letters, reads: "2023 NACo WESTERN INTERSTATE REGION CONFERENCE MAY 17-19 WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH".

Entries open for 2023 NACo-Nationwide scholarship

Are you the parent, grandparent or legal guardian of a high school senior? If you have an active account funded by employee dollars to a 457(b) Plan offered through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, your student is eligible to apply for one of four \$2,500 college scholarships. Scholarships will be awarded in the fall of 2023.

In its 23rd year of existence, the NACo/Nationwide scholarship essay contest is an educational opportunity for high school students transitioning into a new stage of their lives. Engaging young people in civic life and responsibilities is a great way to show high school students the valuable roles that counties play in the lives of their residents. The 2023 scholarship program's goal is to help ensure that young people get involved and stay involved in local government — and understand the importance of being good stewards of their future finances.

To help students consider the importance of saving early and consistently, students are asked to write an essay that answers the following questions (in bold):

Preparing for retirement early in your professional career provides for financial freedom/flexibility and an opportunity to participate in opportunities that you may not have been able to do at the beginning of your career. During the past year, we have seen inflation rates as high as 9 percent, the Federal Reserve significantly increase interest rates and, in the news, recently, we had the largest bank failure in the United States since 2008. **What do you think these events signal about your ability to build financial wealth and independence?**

As you enter college, retirement seems so far off that it hardly feels real and certainly is not a priority. In fact, it's one of the most common excuses young people make to justify not saving for retirement. As people currently nearing retirement age will tell you, time slips by before you know it, and building a sizable savings



becomes more difficult if you don't start early. You will undoubtedly face new financial challenges, such as student debt, mortgage/rent expenses and car payments to name a few. There is one thing you have in your favor and that is TIME. Even a small amount saved per pay period for retirement over time can make a huge difference in your future. With time on your side, saving for retirement becomes a much more pleasant — and exciting — prospect. **Please also share, how TIME can assist you to overcome the future financial challenges you will be sure to face?**

As you consider your response, think of retirement as an opportunity for wealth accumulation. Describe retirement planning tools and strategies that can help you determine the actions and decisions necessary to achieve your financial independence. Consider using the following key strategies in your response: Employer Savings Programs, Compound Interest, Advantage of Pre-Tax Dollars, Portability, Advantage of Post-Tax Dollars, Determining Income Goals, Risk Tolerance and the idea that you may have more time and fewer financial responsibilities at a younger age.

Eligibility requirements

Graduating high school seniors who are legal U.S. residents are eligible to apply. Please keep the following criteria in mind:

- Applicants must enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study no later than the autumn term of the 2023-2024 school year at an accredited Trade School or two or four-year college.
- Immediate family members of NACo employees, members of the NACo Defined Contribution and Retirement Advisory Committee or its governing board of directors, staff of individual state Association of Counties that are members of the LLC and Nationwide employees are not eligible to apply; this program is not offered outside the United States.

- The application and entry must be submitted online at nrsforu.com/scholarship by May 31, 2023.

Application process

Parents, grandparents or legal guardians should talk to their eligible high school seniors about applying right away. Applications can be completed online at nrsforu.com/scholarship.

43 years of partnership — and still going strong

The NACo-Nationwide Scholarship is one of the many benefits available as a result

of four decades of partnership between Nationwide and the National Association of Counties (NACo) and its member counties. For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact David Belnick at belnid1@nationwide.com or 410-790-5440, or contact your Nationwide representative at 1-877-677-3678.

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) partners with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to provide counties and their employees with a competitive deferred compensation program.



PROFILES IN SERVICE

EDWIN E. BOOTH

NACo Board Member
Beaufort County Commissioner
Beaufort County, N.C.

Number of years active in NACo: 12

Years in public service: 22

Occupation: Retired administrative hearing officer for state of North Carolina.

Education: Graduate of Pantego High School; attended Beaufort County Community College

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Barack Obama, Joseph Biden and Thurgood Marshall.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Am afraid of flying.



BOOTH

My favorite music is: R&B music

My favorite U.S. president is: Barack Obama

My county is a NACo member because: Of the many services and valuable information it provides to all counties and its advocacy for county priorities in federal policymaking.

The last book I read was: "It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership," by Colin Powell

My favorite movie is: "A Time to Kill"

A dream I have is to: Travel to all 50 states.



BEHIND THE SEAL

LINCOLN COUNTY, N.M.

in the actual shape of Lincoln County, positioning it where it's located in the state and giving it a 3D illusion.

The arrow and cavalry sword at the bottom of the seal are intended to highlight the local Mescalero Apache tribe and the county's Native American history.

For over 120 years, Lincoln County, N.M. didn't have a county seal, until there was an effort in the early 1990s to display flags from each of New Mexico's 33 counties in the New Mexico State Capitol rotunda. Stirling Spencer, a Lincoln County commissioner at the time, stepped up to create the design. Wanting to create something more unique than the traditional structure of county seals, Spencer decided to make it



The pickaxe, brand and hoe at the top represent the importance of mining, ranching and farming, respectively, to the area.

Want to see your county seal featured in County News? Contact Meredith Moran at mmoran@naco.org.



Which residents benefit from prescription discounts?

Live Healthy helps residents:

- ▷ Without Insurance
- ▷ With High Deductible Plans
- ▷ When Live Healthy has a better price than insurance

Any resident (and their pets) of a county, parish or borough participating in the Live Healthy Discount Program are eligible to save.

Enroll now at NACo.org/Health

*The Live Healthy program is not insurance. Prescription savings may vary by drug and pharmacy; discounts are only available at participating pharmacies.



BRIGHT IDEAS | WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TENN.

Animal Shelter Gets Proactive in Wake of County Population Growth

PROBLEM:

When Williamson County's population increased, so did the need for more animal shelter services.

SOLUTION:

The county built a new shelter that is proactive, adding low-cost and free public service programs.

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

Williamson County, Tenn. is one of the fastest-growing counties in the country, and with more people comes more pets. When the county's old animal shelter was built in 1994, the county population was around 90,000. By 2040, the county population is expected to reach 500,000. To accommodate its explosive growth, the county built a new animal center, investing in low-cost to free programs for owners, such as spay/neuter services, pet training and rabies vaccine clinics.

"We've moved to a lot of public service rather than just reacting and taking the animals," said Ondrea Johnson, director of the Williamson County Animal Shelter. "We're trying to keep animals with their original owners and we're trying to provide resources for the people in our community to help them care for the animals they have. So, in order to do that, we needed not only more kennels to house the growing animal population in our community, but also more workspaces.

"In our old building, our community cat coordinator, we joked that the shower stall was her cubicle, but her desk was literally in a disabled shower stall because we were completely out of places to put people," Johnson said. "Our social media person worked in our data closet — it was bad."

The new shelter, which opened in February 2022, is 35,000 square feet and has a



Cats have plenty of room to play in light-filled spaces at the Williamson County, Tenn. animal shelter.
Photo courtesy of county

20 percent capacity increase from the previous shelter, with enough room for 88 dogs and 164 cats. The firm Shelter Planners of America did an assessment for the county, analyzing data including owner rate and owner surrender compared to population to determine how many kennels were needed, Johnson said.

Physical improvements to the center — which is Occupational Safety and Health Administration-friendly — include improved airflow, ultra-violet sterilization ventilation systems and access to natural light for every animal.

"When you start to build a shelter, you have to design it

more like a hospital than you do an animal holding area, because we get a lot of diseases and we don't control the population," Johnson said. "We're open intake, most county facilities are, which means we have to take any stray or owner surrender animal that a citizen of our county brings to us, so we get animals with ringworm, with parvo, with upper respiratory infections — you name it, we get it and everything was getting recirculated.

"That costs money, that's medication and it prevents [pets] from being adopted. There are a lot of dominoes that happen when an animal comes into the shelter sick, so in this

building each separate ward has its own ventilation system."

To ensure the shelter runs as efficiently as possible, the county created a taskforce comprised of shelter staff, veterinarians, Animal Control officers, police officers, animal rescue and community members.

"Police officers know that sometimes they need to make a drop of a dog in the middle of the night — so what does it need to look like?" Johnson said. "What kind of spaces are convenient for you to make your job easier? Our county mayor had the foresight to add all the stakeholders to that task force who might ever interact with Animal Control, and he basi-

cally said, 'Dream big, come up with a wish list.'

"... I've been super fortunate that I have a county mayor, his chief of staff and a county commission that are very open to creatively solving these problems," she said. "They're not just looking at the way it's always been done and they're not looking at just providing animal control or just providing rabies control — it's 'How can we work together as a community to solve some of these problems?'"

Community engagement was identified as an area the shelter wanted to build on, Johnson said, so it added community ed-

Upgrading your animal shelter and services requires community engagement

From ANIMALS page 11

education programming to broaden who it was working with and reaching out to, targeting those experiencing homelessness, those in Section 8 housing and school-aged children.

Initiatives include the Canine Advocate Program, which teaches awareness of dog behavior and bite prevention; the Book Buddies Reading Program for children ages 5 to 12 to practice their reading skills to cats; a pilot program that provides adequate housing for outdoor pets and the expansion of the shelter's pet food bank.

People, regardless of their circumstances, will put their pet's well-being over their own, studies have found. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of the U.S. houseless population owns a pet. It's been reported as common for low-income seniors and people with disabilities to feed their pets over themselves and a 2019

survey conducted by the financial group LendEDU found that 24 percent of respondents had gone into debt to pay for their pet's healthcare bills.

"Hurricane [Harvey] in Houston, for example, my husband's a firefighter, so he was down there for rescue and there were

in the food assistance programs, we know that people will make poor choices for humans in order to benefit their pets. So, you have to be sensitive to that if you're truly serving the full population of your county."

When Johnson became director of the shelter in 2018, she

"We started with this idea that 'Oh, wouldn't it be great if we can offer low-cost spay-neuter that would incentivize people to get their animals sterilized? We wouldn't have all these litters.' But what we didn't know that was going into COVID, there was going to be literally a crisis

really well, that we already had that built into this building, because it has been a real struggle nationwide."

In addition to the county funding the \$15.4 million building of the new shelter, \$3 million in private funding created additional services, like free weekly pet training classes. Donations will also fund up to 8,000 spay and neuter services each year.

"We started trying to always be helpful when the public engaged us for any service, and it really went a long way to building trust," Johnson said. "Sometimes the donations were \$5, but we tried to make a big deal over every single kid who brought in their piggy bank and dumped out \$2.63, all the way up to the million-dollar donors."

Johnson acknowledged that many counties don't have the resources Williamson County has to devote to pets and said there's alternative ways to cultivate animal well-being. At the end of the day, it all boils down to community engagement, she said.

"I'm from Tennessee and the county I'm from has a very limited Animal Control presence, so I know that it can be hard, because in areas without as many resources, it's hard to devote and you feel like you're deferring funding from things that animals need, but there's a way to strike a balance," Johnson said. "You can engage your community, you can think outside the box, you can utilize volunteers, you can utilize other companies, you can take donated food from people.

"There was a time when we were using volunteer vets — we didn't have a vet on staff, we were using relationships within the community to accomplish a lot of these things, so it's not always just been throwing money at it. I really believe, when you boil it all down, it's about relationships and it's about building trust and treating people with dignity and meeting people where they are." **CN**

Williamson County's "Changing the Way We Shelter" program earned the county a NACo Achievement Award in 2022 in the Civic Education and Public Information category.

'You have to be sensitive [to be sure] you're truly serving the full population of your county.'

people who wouldn't leave their home — they were waist-deep in water, but they wouldn't leave without their pets," Johnson said. "So, there is a trickle effect if you are going to end up putting firefighters, police officers, people like that in harm's way if you don't account for people's pets.

"We know that people who are on food assistance will give their canned chicken to their cat, because there's no cat food

said its biggest crisis was its cat population.

"Cats were literally stacked everywhere — they were in dog crates, they were in bathrooms," she said. "I mean, they were everywhere. Kittens and cats were coming out of our ears."

In addition to adopting a community cat program used in Greenville, S.C., the shelter began offering spay/neuter services for all Williamson County pet owners.

in veterinary shortage, and it's so difficult to even get private spay-neuter now that people weren't having access, even people who wanted to pay.

"So, we created a fee structure where if you don't qualify for free or reduced-cost services, you can still pay to have your animals spayed or neutered here, because access to it on the private market has become very difficult. We had no way of knowing that, but it worked out

GET TO KNOW...

Franklin County, Maine

Welcome to Franklin County

Franklin County — named for inventor, writer and U.S. founding father Benjamin Franklin — was established by the Maine state legislature in 1838. The county borders Quebec, Canada and is known for its scenic topography, including White Mountain National Forest and the Appalachian Scenic Trail. Franklin County has a population of just under 30,000, making it the second-least populous county in Maine. Its county seat, Farmington, is the birthplace of Maine's current governor, Janet Mills.

Each year, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce hosts a celebration in honor of Farmington resident Chester Greenwood, the inventor of earmuffs. To combat the cold when he went ice skating, Greenwood designed the first pair of earmuffs out of wire, beaver fur and flannel when he was 15 and at 19, he acquired a patent for an



updated version, replacing the wire with bands and flannel with velvet pads. His earmuff factory created jobs for county residents for 60 years, and 1936 marked its highest production year with 400,000 pairs. "Chester Greenwood Day," which is officially recognized by Maine's

legislature and held on the first Saturday of December, features a parade, chili cook-off, caroling and a "polar bear dip" in Clearwater Lake.

The Ski Museum of Maine, which displays early 20th century Maine-made skis and gear and holds the Maine Ski Hall of Fame, is located in the

county.

Also in the county are Maine's largest glacial erratic, Daggett Rock and its largest state park, Mount Blue. The state park is located in the town of Weld, with a population of fewer than 500 people.

"Get to Know" features new NACo member counties.

SPONSORED CONTENT

FIVE REASONS TO MOVE TO AN E-PERMITTING SOLUTION

Moving to an online application and permitting system increases efficiency, reduces errors, increases compliance, generates revenue from permitting and licensing fees and results in a better experience for constituents.

If your county still uses a paper or PDF application and permitting process, here are five reasons to modernize with an e-permitting solution.

1. E-permitting is 100 percent digital

Even PDF forms sometimes must be printed and mailed. For fillable PDFs and online forms that are digital for the constituent, there is still some level of data entry and processing once it reaches the clerk's office.

E-permitting and licensing

is 100 percent digital. Constituents submit an online application, e-sign and submit secure online payments.

This is helpful for counties where constituents may be more geographically separated from county buildings. Bringing the licensing and permitting online also increases compliance rates as businesses are more likely to complete the required processes when they don't have to travel.

2. Applications are automatically routed to the next reviewer

In a paper or PDF process, an application makes the rounds to reviewers via email or interoffice mail. The application may sit in someone's mailbox or inbox for days, slowing the

process.

With e-permitting, you dictate the review process and sequence, and the application is automatically routed to the next person. If there isn't a specific review sequence, you can even have multiple people reviewing an application simultaneously.

3. Real-time status updates eliminate confusion

With a traditional process, an application may get stuck with a reviewer, resulting in multiple phone calls or emails to track the status.

When a reviewer gets a notification from the e-permitting software that an application is waiting, they can approve, deny, or request additional information. This action triggers a real-time status update and

email to the applicant.

4. Fee calculation and secure online payments

Fees are often calculated based on certain criteria in an application (i.e., square footage or capacity). An applicant might not know the total until the end of the process.

Custom formulas can be added to e-permitting online applications to calculate fees automatically in real time. A payment portal facilitates secure online payments.

5. Logic reduces errors

Some applications for licenses and permits can be very complex. If an applicant skips a question on a paper or PDF form, it requires extra time and effort for a reviewer to track down the information.

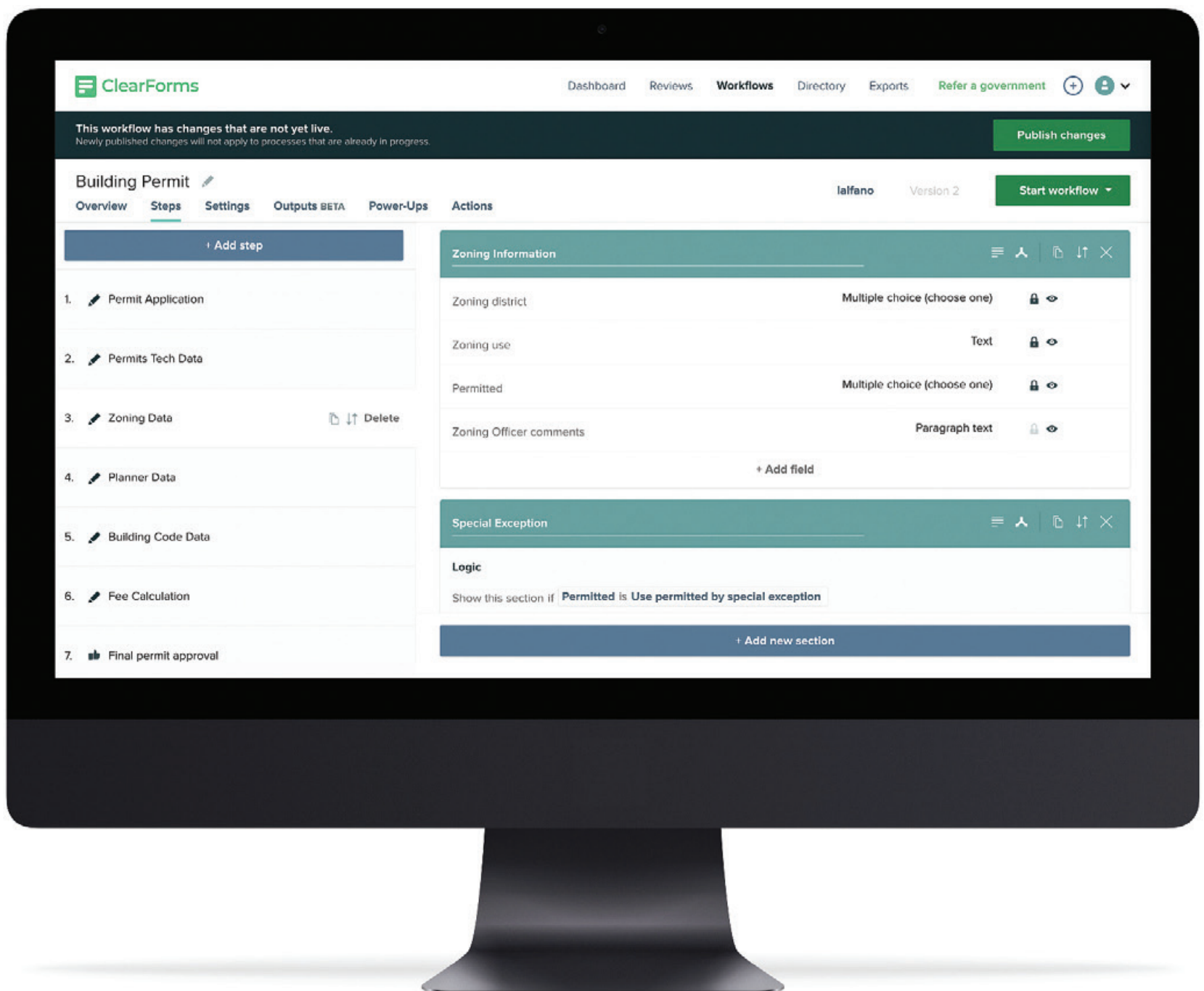
With e-permitting, custom logic identifies required fields or uploads. When criteria are met, it can trigger conditional reviews and business rules to route the applicant to the next required section automatically.

This prevents the applicant from skipping sections and reduces errors.

ClearForms from ClearGov - the easiest e-permitting solution

Stop wasting time on manual licensing and permitting processes. Get started with ClearForms, and see how EASY it is to bring your process online in less than five minutes!

Schedule a demo today and see for yourself why ClearGov is a preferred solution for NACo members.



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

YOLO COUNTY'S district attorney will test new technology that **automates prison file reviews** — making the process faster, cutting spending of taxpayer dollars and allowing for more cases to be reviewed. UC Berkeley's Possibility Lab and non-profit organization For the People worked together to create the data-driven tool that reviews the files of incarcerated people for potential release.

FLORIDA

OSCEOLA COUNTY'S Pathway to Housing program educates **first-time home buyers** on money management and home ownership, pays a year of rent for eligible families and then matches what they've saved for a down payment up to \$10,000 on a home. The county is working on the initiative with the local branch of the Salvation Army, which is vetting qualified residents.



COLORADO

SUMMIT COUNTY officials are working to implement a "Pay as You Throw" program that would **charge residents for larger trash bins**, with the goal of increasing recycling and diverting waste. An issue that has arisen is how the new initiative would harm low-income families, so commissioners are considering adopting an approach to provide subsidies to those who currently qualify for other forms of government assistance, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP. "Pay as You Throw" would function under the county's Community Climate Action Plan, which aims to increase diverted waste from landfills to 40 percent (a 20 percent increase) by 2035.

up to \$200 for cameras and \$100 for security camera subscriptions for residents who live in what the county deems "high crime areas." The idea came from Agnew's mother, who personally asked Councilmember Krystal Oriadha for something to be done at a vigil for the 13-year-old.

NEW JERSEY

A successful pilot program is coming back for seconds in **UNION COUNTY**. **Social 60+** aims to ensure older adults

See **NEWS FROM** page 15



NEVADA

If you're going to be home to the tallest observation wheel in North America, you're going to have to be ready to **rescue people** from the tallest observation wheel in North America — the High Roller. The **CLARK COUNTY** Fire Department recently held drills 550 feet above the Las Vegas Strip.

"This training gives our firefighters an opportunity to practice complex, high-angle rescues and to refine the safety measures we have in place in the event that a rescue needs to be accomplished," said Fire Chief John Steinbeck.

FLORIDA

HILL-SBOROUGH COUNTY is implementing a new food system that will foster collaboration between local organizations that grow and distribute food with residents who are interested in getting involved with anything from growing, composting, purchasing and cooking food. The intent is to **prevent food waste** and create a culture around community food.



IOWA

JOHNSON COUNTY is **diversifying its workplace** through an apprenticeship program intended to benefit people of color, women and low-income workers. The program, which is funded through American Rescue Plan dollars, is starting with an apprenticeship through the county's ambulance service, which will be followed by its EMT program and IT department.

MARYLAND

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY is set to **increase surveillance systems for residents and businesses** following the death of a local boy who was killed while raking leaves outside of his home in which no suspects were identified by county police. The Jayz Agnew Law will provide vouchers of



HAWAII

HAWAII COUNTY is making its **beach parks more accessible** for those with disabilities, installing ramps, concrete walkways, seating and ADA-compliant bathrooms and parking. The process began in 2000, but has reached numerous roadblocks along the way, including construction delays due to funding, lack of materials and being short-staffed and the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining upgrades are set to be completed by the end of 2024.



From NEWS FROM page 14

receive a healthy meal and get out in the community. Participating restaurants accept vouchers from the Union County Division on Aging in exchange for meal options designated by the restaurant and approved by a nutritionist. Participants must eat their meal at the restaurant. The program is open to county residents 60 years and older who agree to attend a nutrition education program offered by the Division on Aging at least once a quarter and provide all necessary information during intake. Both the county's nutritionists and the servers agree — no substitutions.

NEW YORK

A new vocational initiative throughout the state will equip 57 county detention centers to train incarcerated individuals to become **certified custodial technicians**, in an effort to boost their employment prospects after their release and keep the jails a little cleaner in the process. The program is funded by a state Department of Health grant awarded

PENNSYLVANIA

BUCKS COUNTY has filed a **lawsuit against social media companies**, alleging TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Facebook have worsened anxiety and depression in young people. The suit claims the platforms are designed to exploit their vulnerabilities for profit.

The county is seeking unspecified monetary damages to help fund mental health outpatient programs, mobile crisis units, family-based mental health services and in-school mental health programming and training to address the mental health of young people, CNN reported.



in 2021 and will be covered by commissary funds after that grant runs out.

OREGON

MULTNOMAH COUNTY is opening the first of two Safe Park Villages — a park offering services and a **safe place to sleep** for people experiencing homelessness who live in passenger vehicles. A nonprofit community support and service provider will be on site at all hours.

TEXAS

HARRIS COUNTY will soon offer free legal counseling to residents facing eviction. **Eviction Defense Program** participants will have the opportunity to meet with an attorney or legal representative at the court where their eviction case is held. Their household's income must be at or below 300 percent of the current Federal Poverty Guideline or 65 percent of Harris County's Area Median Income.

VIRGINIA

ALBEMARLE COUNTY is offering grants to residents who want to get involved in helping the environment and in **combating climate change**.

The grants for the Community Climate Action Grant Program range from \$5,000-\$25,000. The program encourages community members to participate in the county's goal of achieving zero net carbon emissions by 2050.

"We recognize as a local government that there are lots of folks in the community who probably have good ideas for local climate action for getting involved," said Gabe Dayley, who manages the Climate Protection Program.

WISCONSIN

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY is launching a **drone education program** for residents. The FlySafe program, coordinated by the Sheboygan County Planning and Conservation Office, teaches residents and visitors FAA drone rules, local advisories, ground risk hazards and additional information to help them plan safer and compliant flights when operating in the region, all online.

Charlie Ban and Meredith Moran compile News From Across the Nation. Does your county have news we should know about? Contact cban@naco.org and mmoran@naco.org.



Josh Beck and his nephew Charlie clear out drains as part of the Adopt-a-Drain program. Photo courtesy of Waukesha County Parks and Land Use

WAUKESHA COUNTY Parks and Land Use is adding new participating municipalities for its **Adopt-A-Drain** program. Seven communities are now keeping local storm drains clean through this program. Adopters are asked to clean the surface of their storm drain twice a month and report the quantity and composition of any debris they remove. All participants are provided a brief online training to learn how to remain safe while clearing their drain and they will also receive a safety vest and storm drain marker medallion.

Making Narcan easily available

From NARCAN page 2

county jails it had existing relationships with through medication-assisted treatment, and other organizations were connected through word of mouth, according to Costello.

Ingham County Jail in Michigan unveiled its Narcan vending machine last month.

"I have clearly seen, on calls in the community, this literally brings people back from the dead," Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wrigglesworth said.

"So, certainly the more we can do that, the less likely people are going to continue down this path, the less likely that they're going to obviously pass and have this tragedy transcend their families, the less likely we have to go to overdoses, save people's lives, investigate how they acquired the opiate or whatever they overdosed on.

'...this literally brings people back from the dead.'

— Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wrigglesworth

".. As people who may have substance use disorder are getting released from jail, they may have that urge to use again, so this is just a way that they can put that insurance policy in their pocket if they do choose to use again.

"We hope they don't, but we know reality is that it happens, so they can have this life-saving reverse agent on them when they get released."

Narcan vending machines are an important asset in the country's larger uphill fight in the opioid crisis, Costello said.

"We keep defibrillators in just about every public space that there are out there, why are we not doing these same kinds of things for Naloxone?" Costello said.

"There's a lot of work left to do, but where we are today versus where I started with the center four years ago — I think we've come a long, long way." **CN**

'I like this level of government work...it's where the rubber meets the road'

From QUEZADA page 3

me, that he was crazy, because I would never ever be a stand-up comic," Quezada said. "But after a couple of years of starving, I was like, 'Well, I'll have to look at that again, just to see what that's all about,' and I fell in love with it — it was the hardest thing I've ever done."

Over 30 years later, Quezada has established a successful career for himself in comedy.

It was his comedy background that helped him land "Breaking Bad," as Vince Gilligan, the show's head writer and director, wanted to use the characters of Gomez and his DEA partner, Hank, played by Dean Norris, as comic relief in the beginning of the "crazy drama," he said.

Through all of the success of "Breaking Bad" — it was named the most critically acclaimed television show of all time by Guinness World Records — it was the praise of his Latino peers in media that meant the most to Quezada, he said.

"I remember the day George Lopez called me — he said, 'I'm so extremely proud of you, and I'm proud that in this crazy show of a bunch of bad people ... you get to play the actual by-the-book good guy, because Latinos don't normally see that, not in that drug, gang kind of setting.'"

"I was very excited, like 'Look it's the SAG award!' Quezada said. "[My wife] goes, 'Yeah, does that take out the trash though?' I went 'No,' put it down and took out the trash."

From his time on set, Quezada has kept some souvenirs — beakers, pillows, shirts from Gomie's wardrobe (one of which he donated to a non-profit, the remaining two he said he intends to donate, as well).

"My wife and I when we went to all of the premiere parties in L.A., they would be all decorated with 'Breaking Bad' stuff and we would snag that at the end of the night, so we knew we could use that to also raise money for non-profits," Quezada said.

'I'm a compromiser, and I know that 'compromise' is a new bad word...'

Seven years after the show's final season, Quezada reprised his role as Gomie for two episodes of its hit spin-off, "Better Call Saul." He said his favorite part about returning to the "Breaking Bad" universe was getting to act once again alongside his former co-star and close friend Dean Norris.

"I love Dean with all my heart, so to be able to go back and do work with him was special for both of us," Quezada said.

"We really care for each other a lot, we're always still in contact. We'll call each other just to give each other grief because we miss it, but it was great to play Hank and Gomez at the beginning, before all the drama happened to them, because at the beginning, we

were like the comic relief, and it was fun to do that again."

Quezada has described "Breaking Bad's" location (Bernalillo County) as a character of its own on the show. It's that admiration for the county and its residents that keeps him devoted as an elected official — even if the politics of the job can be "brutal," he said.

"I like this level of government work and politics because the county commission is where the rubber meets the road," Quezada said. "We're the ones who actually get the work done; we make sure that the funding is spent and that it's done to the best of our ability."

"I'm a compromiser, and I know that 'compromise' is a new bad word on the national level, but I think that's the beginning of us losing our way. This is the thing that I've always said since I started running for office — I'm like, 'Hey, look, if I put something forward and it doesn't work, I don't have a problem bringing it back and fixing it.' There's a reason why

we write everything down on paper, and that we don't chisel it in stone anymore."

Juggling his work as an elected official with stand-up sets and acting auditions results in the hectic schedule of most people's nightmares — he's just come off a night performing five shows followed by an early morning meeting with the county manager — but Quezada wouldn't have it any other way, he said.

"That's what I do — that's who I am at the end of the day," Quezada said.

"But everybody has a job. I know that mine's unique to this type of community service ... but it's rare that you have somebody who's retired [as a commissioner], and it seems like the ones who are retired are the ones who need a term limit," he said, with a laugh. "That's what I love about county government though; I think counties got it right."

"You've got eight years, do it, knock yourself out and then when you're done, somebody else gets to." **CN**

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